DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 244 512 FL 014 299

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TITLE Problems of Administrating an ESL Program in the People's Republic of China.
PUB DATE May 82
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Foreign Student Affairs (35th, Seattle, WA, May 1982).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Problems; Administrator Characteristics; Case Studies; *English (Second Language); Expectation; *Foreign Countries; International Educational Exchange; *Program Administration; Program Development; *Second Language Programs; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Exchange Programs
IDENTIFIERS *China (Beijing); State University of New York Buffalo

ABSTRACT

Experiences and problems encountered in administering the English as a second language (ESL) program at the Beijing Municipal University System/State University of New York (Buffalo) English Language Training Center during the first year of its operation in 1981 are described and discussed. The program draws from all nine universities in the Beijing system, providing a heterogeneous population in terms of discipline and age. All students were instructors in their schools, each with the goal of studying in the United States either as a visiting scholar or as a degree candidate. The major administrative problems arose from misunderstandings in the negotiation process concerning student and teacher background and expectations. The native students and teachers were less prepared than anticipated, and the planned curriculum had to be rejected and revamped. At first, the teachers appeared more interested in American literature, history, and culture than ESL methodology. Daily workshops in ESL instruction for the teachers became a necessity. Fear of failure was the largest problem of teachers in both testing and instruction, since the teachers were younger than the students. Instruction in English for special purposes was requested and included in the curriculum. Characteristics valuable to an ESL teacher administering such a program include flexibility, ability and willingness to negotiate, and a sense of humor. Confidence and stateside support, strong preparation in English grammar, and appreciation of the educational practices of China (such as reliance on memorization) are also necessary. Text and a teacher's guide for one classroom exercise are appended. (MSE)

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PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTRATING AN ESL PROGRAM IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

BY

DONNA S. RICE

FL014299

Paper presented at the 35th Annual NAFSA Conference, May 1982

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Problems of Administrating an ESL Program in the People's Republic of China

Teaching English in China has been described by some as a baffling experience; by others, as a truly "enlightening" experience, and by still others, as a rewarding experience; but for the majority of those who have been adventurous enough to take the plunge, it has seldom been described as having been a dull experience.

This paper is based on the personal experiences of the writer while on assignment during the Fall of 1981 as Director-in-Residence of the Beijing Municipal University System/SUNY Buffalo English Language Training Center in Leijing. January of 1981 marked the begining of the program which, in the Fall of 1981, became part of a three-year exchange agreement signed by then SUNY Buffalo President, Robert Ketter and the Beijing Bureau of Higher Education. The center is now well into its fourth year.

While there are many U.S. university affilliated language programs in Beijing, the SUNY Buffalo program is unique in that

it was the first to draw students from all nine universities in the Beijing Municipal University System. As a result, the student population at the ELT center is heterogeneous in terms of disciplines. For example, the Fall 1981 group represented fields such as opthamology, physical education, medicine, philosophy, economics, various hard sciences, and several branches of engineering. Students ranged in age from 26 to 46, and all were instructors in these areas at their respective schools. The ultimate goal of all was to study either as a visiting scholar, or as a degree candidate in the United States.

Major Administrative Problems

In an article on the causes of difficult commercial negotiations between the Chinese and Westerners, lawyer Stanley Lubman suggests that the causes of misunderstanding during negotiations extend beyond the natural result of the meeting of two disparate cultures to include "less obvious, but perhaps even more significant disparities in the perception of the nature and implications of basic

concepts, so that the two sides often appear to be talking at, rather than with each other."[1] Similar conclusions can be drawn about the causes of misunderstanding in negotiations between Chinese and Western educators, particularly when a program is being planned on one side of the world that is actually to be run on the other. For example, although Beijing requested, and SUNY Buffalo provided copies of syllabi and descriptions of texts beforehand, we in Buffalo actually received very little clear information about the prospective students and their level of English proficiency. Based on the negotiations, we expected to be receiving intermediate to advanced level students, and to be supervising well-trained Chinese ESL teachers who had some prior knowledge of ESP. Thus, a broad, fairly sophisticated program for intermediate and advanced levels was planned. The length of the program was to be about seven months, and there was to be a heavy emphasis on teacher training. What we actually received upon arrival in China were mostly beginning to intermediate level students, and very young, very energetic but inexperienced teachers who were actually

promising young students of English who had been trained at the Foreign Languages Institute Branch School, but who did not have college degrees. They had interest in, but no real knowledge of ESP methodology. At the end of the first day, it was quite apparent that most of the syllabi and several of the textbooks were going to be inappropriate. For example, Reader's Choice [2] had been chosen as the intermediate level Reading text, but about one third of the students needed a text about the level of Encounters[3]. In addition, both teachers and students appeared to lack confidence in their ability to use English.

Profile of the Teachers

During the first year, the center staff consisted of one native speaker, who served as both director and teacher, and three Chinese teachers, only one of whom had a degree from a normal college. The others were young English language students who had taught at least one semester of ESL at an elementary level at the Foreign Languages Branch School. They had a good basic knowledge of grammar,

good aural comprehension, and the younger two spoke the British variety of English at an advanced level of proficiency. However, at first the teachers appeared to be more interested in learning about American literature and American history and culture than in learning methodology for ESL. One teacher admittedly would have preferred to be a university student studying in a degree program rather than to be a teacher of ESL. Fortunately, these attitudes did change over time. However, in the beginning, the inexperience of the teachers led to many curricular problems. The teachers were afraid to teach from advanced level textbooks, and were reluctant to correct any written prose, even at the sentence level. After a few days and many attempts to adjust the curriculum, it was quite apparent that the logical solution to the problem was to throw out the carefully planned curriculum and to proceed with a completely different format. In other words, what had been anticipated to be a well-planned, highly structured, fairly sophisticated program became, for the most part,"bare bones teaching".

The New Format

After a little "negotiation" and confidence building, it had been agreed that the Chinese teachers would teach the skill area courses in the daily morning sessions for a total of 10 hours per week. This plan did not change. My task was to develop suitable lesson plans and materials during the morning hours. This task intensified due to the textbook problem. Duplicating was a problem, so it was necessary to type several carbon copies of exercises if they were to be used on the day of preparation. Eventually, I learned the system and was able to get copies duplicated on the same day, provided that originals were typed on stencils. Even though she was a bit uncomfortable with the assignment, the most experienced teacher had been given the grammar classes. I agreed to correct all written work for the first six weeks.

It was obvious that some priorities needed to be established in the area of teacher training. Teacher training became a daily task rather than weekly workshops as originally planned. Rather than focusing on various types of ESL methodology,

how to teach an effective class in reading became the priority. The training consisted mainly of a discussion of the important points to be covered in the daily reading lesson, and an explanation of new vocabulary items for the teacher prior to his teaching the class. Assistance was given in the other skill areas as needed.

In order for all students to benefit from having access to a native speaker, the students were divided into groups which met with me on alternate afternoons for more contextual reading, spoken reinforcement of the grammar, and clarification of any AM class material that had proven to be problematic throughout the skill areas. These groups were alternated with improvised "language laboratory" classes run by the Spoken teacher. Friday afternoons were reserved for viewing of films and TOEFL review classes. Since 1981 was the first year that the TOEFL was to be given in China, the TOEFL review classes were extremely popular. All students were stricken with a severe case of "Toeflitis", although unknown to any of us at the time, only 300 students in all of China would be allowed to take

the first examination.

Problems Associated With Specific Skill Areas

Fear of failure was the overriding problem of teachers in all skill areas. There was a need to save face before the students, who were all older than the teachers. As for methodology, the grammar teacher appeared to have a definite preference for the grammar translation method, and no apparent understanding of the need for usage of the grammar in context, rather than the need for rote memorization of rules. Preparation of tests was felt to be an impossible task, as was correcting the grammar. After talking with other American teachers of ESL, it was discovered that a lack of confidence in these areas was also common in other programs. Therefore, a workshop on the preparation of tests was scheduled.

The reading teacher, who was only 19 years old, was an absolute delight. However, he knew very little about the concept of reading from the context, or of reading methodology leading to the development of reading skills which could be applied to any piece of prose. Having

never ventured outside of China, he also had certain weaknesses in the use of vocabulary. Preparation of tests was totally new task, but the desire to learn was strong. This teacher taught all reading classes. The subject matter in the text chosen for the advanced level, American Topics,[4] was truly of interest to both the teacher and the students. However, because of a lost textbook shipment, there was not a class set of this text, and students were required to share. The teacher handled the situation skillfully, and actually developed into a highly competent teacher who is now studying in a degree program at the First Teacher's College.

The Chinese teacher having the highest degree of oral proficiency was selected to teach the Spoken English classes. Her diction was excellent and she was also a fast and eager learner. However, a lack of cultural knowledge needed to be able to explain the nuances of some two-word verbs and idioms effectively was a problem. Fortunately, the text chosen for the intermediate class, Two-Word Verbs In English[5] (Hooks) places two-word verbs in context in reading selections, which made the task somewhat easier. In order to assist the

teacher with pronunciation and fluency, the lessons were put on tape. The teacher then practiced the native speaker stress and intonation patterns before introducing the lesson to the class. Since students in the beginning level class were reluctant to even try to have small group discussions, or to do simple oral presentations, much of the oral practice was done in the afternoon sessions with the native speaker. Students were seldom heard using English among themselves outside of class, since they really had no need for the second language outside of the academic setting.

Teaching ESP

Many of the students voiced a strong interest in ESP. Since the group was so heterogeneous in terms of disciplines, the focus was placed on English for Academic Purposes, which was taught based on the rhetorical approach outlined by Louis Trimble. Students were taught to be aware of the conceptual paragraph, to observe punctuation clues that aid in comprehension, to extract meaning from noun-compounds, to recognize common words that have different meanings in

scientific prose, and to extract information from graphs and illustrated materials.

It was difficult to find suitable material which had meaningful content for such a diverse group. Therefore, lessons were developed by using content familiar material from publications such as China Reconstructs, the China Daily newspaper, and from the "Care Package " of textbooks then provided for newcomers to China by the American Embassy.

General Observations and Conclusions

If I were asked to describe the personal characteristics of an ESL teacher that could possibly turn a baffling teaching experience in China into a rewarding one, I would select flexibility, the ability and willingness to negotiate, and a good sense of humor. A sincere attempt to negotiate misunderstandings can literally work miracles and enable one to circumvent the ~~beaurascracy~~ bureaucracy with which a foreigner is faced. It is true that in general, the Chinese are strong-willed, but they are also very kind, and it is my opinion that once you gain their trust and respect, they cannot do enough for you.

In terms of work situations, ESL teachers would be wise to recognize that the Chinese have been successfully teaching languages for many years, but they are

anxious to learn about new methodology. However, as stated by one Chinese professor, " Almost every native speaker who comes to China brings a new method, and claims that his method is the best. Chinese teachers become confused and are at a loss as to what method they should adopt." Thus some Chinese teachers tend to lack confidence even when they are extremely capable.

For those teachers who are part of a U.S. university affiliated program, stateside support is also an important determining factor for a successful experience in China. The ~~boauracracy~~ bureaucracy that a foreign teacher faces is bound to prevail, due to a totally different system of higher education, but stateside assistance in terms of good pre-departure counseling, assurance of financial stability while overseas, frequent communication with the overseas staff, and perceived moral support from the home unit are crucial to the success of an overseas program.

As for professional preparation,a strong background in English grammar, and the ability to anticipate questions about grammar points and accordingly, to be able to offer clear explanations about usage are essential skills to have.

The Chinese tend to have phenomenal memories, and memorization appears to have been a part of their system for acquiring knowledge from early childhood,

when children are required to memorize numerous Chinese characters in the first grade. In general, we American teachers have a tendency to challenge this trait, rather than to attempt to find ways to build upon it in our teaching.

The Chinese as adult students are highly motivated in the classroom, and each appears determined to do his part in helping China to realize its Four Modernizations. Thus, sometimes students appear to be a bit overzealous, and this is when a good sense of humor can greatly ease the situation. I discovered that contrary to previous impressions, the Chinese love to play. Games are a part of their heritage, and can be used effectively for learning tasks such as mastering vocabulary, or for comprehending the use of gerunds and infinitives in context.

Finally, if several people who have taught English in China are asked for their impressions of the experience, they each may respond differently. Very often, the degree of satisfaction or unsatisfaction is determined not only by the teaching experience itself, but also by the respondent's perception of China from a sociological, psychological and political point of view. The geographic location of one's assignment is also a determining factor.

China is indeed a land of contrasts and very rapid change. It is also an interesting country whose people are intensely dedicated to its causes and to its progress. If one can perceive the country as it is

and learn not to judge what one perceives in terms of American value systems, then teaching English in China can indeed be a rewarding experience.

NOTES

1. Stanley B. Lubman, "Negotiations in China: Observations of a Lawyer", in Communicating with China, ed., Robert A. Kapp, Chicago: Intercultural Press, 1983.

2. E. Margaret Baudoin et al, Reader's Choice, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1977.

3. Paul Pimsleur and Donald Berger, Encounters New York: Harcourt Brace, Inc., 1974.

4. R. Lugton, American Topics: A Reading-Vocabulary Text for Speakers of English as a Second Language, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1978.

5. J.N. Hook, Two-Word Verbs in English, New York: Harcourt Brace Inc., 1981.

Paper presented at the 34th Annual NAFSA Conference, Seattle, May 1982.

APPENDIX

BUILDING THE IMPOSSIBLE DAM--WEN TIANSHEN

(From China Reconstructs, Vol. XXX, No. 10, October, 1981)

The blue prints alone weigh 100 tons and require 25 trucks to transport. Its power-generating equipment is the biggest of its kind in the world, its shiplocks among the two or three biggest. The Gezhou Dam project on the Changjiang (Yangtse) is one of the most complex, abitious engineering projects of all times--a foreign writer called it "a modern version of the Great Wall." And the entire project is only the first step in a huge water control effort that will be completed by the even larger Three Gorges complex to be built at a later date further upriver.

Together the Gezhou Dam and the Three Gorges projects will supply 30 percent of all China's hydropower--the energy equivalent of 500 million tons of coal a year. The 70 meter tall, 2.5 kilometer dam will also control the floods that for thousands of years have periodically devastated the areas along the river, and irrigate an area of one million square kilometers. They will make a long dangerous stretch of the river easily navigable.

The project was located at a spot where the Changjiang River changed directions from east to south and widened from 300 meters to 2,200 meters. In the center of the widened river, two islands divided the current into three channels. The dam's first stage--two of the three shiplocks, one of the power plants, a huge spillway, and one of the two silt-clearing sluices--have all been built across the second and third channels. Constructio of the last stage, across the first or main channel, will be completed by 1985.

I had looked forward to my visit to the construction site last summer for the official opening of the dam's first stage, but nothing could have prepared me for the vast and orderly spectacle of machinery and workers, for the actual sight of a mighty river harnessed to serve human purposes.

A number of foreign engineers had believed it couldn't be done at all; the technology simply didn't exist. Others were certain that in any event China couldn't do it alone, not with the equipment it had. When told how impossible it was, the Chinese engineers smiled politely and returned to sweat over their drawing boards. In the end, all of the survey, design and construction work was carried out without any foreign assistance. Except for some heavy-duty trucks and specialized construction equipment bought abroad, the materials and equipment were Chinese made. A great achievement for China, I could not help thinking, a great human achievement.

Smooth Sailing at Last

The cheers of onlookers--engineers and workers- nearby peasants, and visiting officials--blended in a thunderous roar with the beating of gongs and the popping of firecrackers. The cause of all the excitement was the first successful test run of Locks No. 2 and 3. The former is among the world's biggest shiplocks, with a chamber 280 meters long and 34 meters wide which can handle a number of ships carrying up to 16,000 tons of freight at one time. Along with a hundred or more journalists from every part of the country, I witnessed the test run from the deck of a passenger ship which carried us from the upper reaches of the river through Lock No. 2. The electrically-operated lift had already raised the dam's movable rail and highway bridge to allow us to pass. The upper

mitered lock gate opened automatically, and closed as soon as we were in. Standing on deck, I watched the lowering water level; the operation was so smooth that I felt as if I were standing on firm ground. We sailed back through Lock No. 3. I timed both passages and each took less than half an hour.

Navigation on the Changjiang makes up 80 percent of inland water transport in China. But the Three Gorges stretch of the river has always been particularly hazardous, with 16 shoals that ships had to navigate slowly and at great peril. One day I took a communications launch to the area above the dam to see for myself what had been accomplished. When Gezhouba's 27-bay spillway is in operation, the water level behind the dam rises from 45 to 60 meters or more, creating a 120-kilometer-long reservoir along the course of the river. Where were the shoals? Buried deep below the mirror-smooth surface of the water we sailed on.

On our way back, an engineer named LI told me, "To improve navigation conditions upstream of the dam, our experts have made countless tests using simulation models, and listened to the opinions of captains who have experience navigating the river. Mountains and rocks have been removed from banks and silt-prevention dikes built, thus taming the turbulent current and making ships passages much easier."

Technology Old and New

Pointing to the silt-clearing sluice on the third channel, LI told me that the Changjiang carries 526 million tons of silt from the upper reaches annually. If allowed to accumulate, the silt would hamper shipping, and even interfere with the operation of the dam. In other

countries, silt is generally cleared periodically by dredging, but, said Li, Chinese engineers thought they could devise a better method. "Our experts studied the experience of Pan Jixun, a Ming dynasty water control expert who lived 400 years ago." Pan had built dikes in such a way that they constrained the flow so that the water carried away the silt.

Adapting this principle, the engineers built a six-bay gated sluice which directs the water toward cement "doorsteps" at the back of the spillway; the water leaps high into the air, carrying the stirred-up silt with it. Thus, the silt is swept away automatically. When the gates are closed, "ships sail on still water;" with the gates open, "silt is washed away in torrential water."

As an innovator, the ancient Pan would have been proud of his modern counterparts on the Gezhouba project. Lock No. 2 has a huge mitered gate as high as a 12-story building; each of its two leaves weigh 600 tons. A foreign reporter asked in amazement, "How on earth did you build and install such a large gate?" The answer was that each was composed of ten smaller sections which were welded together on the spot. Knowing what a difficult and delicate job it is to weld together something of that size which must withstand pressure, the reporter asked who had done the welding. Our guide pointed to a small crowd of off-duty young men and women who were proudly watching the performance of "their" gates. Drawn from among the best welders from throughout the country, these youngsters took their responsibilities so seriously that they scarcely thought or talked of anything but how to do a better job. Even in their sleep, they said they dreamed of welding tests. A young man nicknamed "Wizard" had worked out a new way of preventing steel plates from distorting

I had read in an American magazine, The Chinese Business Review, that those mitered gates were actually the world's largest, and wanted to check this out with the chief engineer. He told me that we should be modest and not make such a claim; even if we don't know of any; perhaps somewhere, there are larger mitered gates.

Firmer than Rock

One question the designers had to answer before any construction took place was: Could the different rock strata at Gezhouba--some of which were soft and weak, liable to shift--be made to support the enormous weight of the dam? Their final solution was another innovation in dam design--concrete foundation pillars driven straight through the weaker rock layers and down to bedrock, 40 meters below the surface. The maximum force each part of the dam might have to withstand and carefully calculated, and historical records of severe floods consulted. The spillway and sluiceway, for instance, are designed to handle more water than the biggest recorded flood ever to hit the river. Each of the lower radical gates of the spillway can withstand a thrust of 4,100 tons.

"We've gone over piles of historical records on earthquakes," an assistant chief engineer told me. "The project's design will enable it to stand up to earthquakes as severe as those rated 7 on the conventional scale." I learned that this 67-year old expert had during construction continually climbed down the 50-meter deep one-meter wide exploratory holes to check personally on geological conditions.

I saw for myself the passages in the foundation where the more than 2,500 sets of below-ground monitoring instruments are located. Like doctors monitoring a patient's pulse, temperature and blood pressure, the dam's technicians were carefully watching all the dials and meters which might warn of problems in any part of the structure. So far, every part of the dam has performed as expected, and tests of the spillway show it even stronger than anticipated.

The spillway remained unharmed this July when a flood--the biggest in China's history--passed through it, with peak flow reaching 72,000 cubic meters per second.

Hydropower

When completed, Gezhou Dam's two power plants will have a total installed capacity of 2,715 megawatts, with an annual output of 14.1 billion kilowatt hours. Just one of Gezhouba's 21 turbines will produce more electricity than China's biggest hydropower plant built before 1949. One of the 170-megawatt generating units has already started operation, a year ahead of schedule.

I was present the day they installed a 950-ton electric rotor. We all held our breath as veteran worker Yang Hairu and his assistants operated two massive cranes and the rotor slowly descended. With incredible precision, the workers lowered the huge rotor exactly in place on the first try. I watched veteran workers from the Northeast who, disregarding the mid-summer heat, were busy installing the high-voltage transmission lines to connect the power plant to the region's electrical network. Team leader Bu Chunqer, who had just climbed down from a high steel tower,

told me that his workers were in the middle of a "technical innovation craze"--constantly trying to develop new methods of installment.

Every time I stood on top of the dam, I was reluctant to leave. I looked at the mighty river, along whose banks the Chinese people have lived for thousands of years, the river that represents two-fifths of China's potential hydropower. I looked at the dam and thought of Dujiang Yan, China's oldest irrigation system built 2,250 years ago. Or China's Grand Canal, started in the 5th century B.C. and expanded in the 7th and 13th centuries. We had started to build shiplocks centuries earlier than the Europeans, and had historically been in the vanguard in water control projects. But a weak feudal government and foreign imperialism had left us far behind the rest of the world in the hundred years before the founding of the people's republic. Only then did we start to catch up.

To modernize our economy, we need the power that projects like this can supply. For a large and populous country such as ours, and one with a long history, Gezhou Dam is an important step, but only a step, on the road to modernization. As I stood on the dam, I felt I could almost hear the marching feet of the nation.

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EXERCISE FOR: Building the Impossible Dam

Part I: Vocabulary Development

DIRECTIONS: Skim the article quickly. Then try to guess the meanings of the following words:

1. devastated (line 12)
2. stretch (line 14)
3. harnessed (line 27)
4. sweat over (line 32)
5. reaches (line 47)
6. hazardous (line 57
7. launch (line 58)
8. taming (line 68)
9. constrained (line 69)
10. hamper (line 73)
11. dredging (line 75)
12. devise (line 76)
13. mitered gate (line 87)
14. withstand (line 93)
15. liable (line 111)
16. piles (line 120)
17. incredible (line 145)
18. craze (line 152)
19. massive (line 145)
20. potential (line 156)
21 vanguard (line 160)

Part II. Comprehension

1. What are the four specific functions of the dam?

2. Before the construction of the dam, what part of the river had been especially dangerous?
3. Read lines 55 - 63 again. What must shoals be?
   What happens to them when the water rises in the spillway?
4. Who was Pan Jixun? Why was his work of 400 years ago valuable to the builders of the dam?

Part III. Common words that have different meaning in technical writing.

In the vocabulary section (Part I) you tried to guess the meaning of words as they were used in the article. Some of these words have different meanings in everyday English contexts. Try to guess the meanings of the following words by paying attention to the cues in the sentences.

1. Whenever I am very tired after sitting in one position for a long time, I get up and walk around for a little while to stretch my legs.

   The gym teacher told us to bend and stretch our muscles everyday.
   Sometimes politicians stretch the truth because they want to be elected.

2. I bought a new hamper for my children to put their dirty clothes in, but somehow I always find their dirty clothes under the bed instead.

3. Most people try very hard to reach their goal in life, but some people are very disappointed when they never do.
   My son says that he is going to be a millionaire one day, but I think that he is reaching for the moon!

   Since little children are very curious, all medicines should be kept out of their reach.

" Where is Michael?"
" I don't know. He already left the office for the day. Why don't you try to reach him at home?"

Part IV. Noun Compounds in technical writing.

Noun compounds are common forms in everyday English. You have already studied many of these. These forms are also used frequently in technical writing. You may have noticed several in the article. Sometimes it is easy to understand the meaning of these forms if you translate them backwards into relative clauses.

Example: power-generating equipment (line 2) =
equipment that generates power.
silt-clearing sluices (lines 20 & 71) =
sluices that clear silt
passages get rid of

Translate the following:

silt-prevention dikes

below-ground monitoring instruments

electrically-operated lift

stirred-up silt

NOTE: NOUN COMPOUNDS CONTAINING NOUN GROUPS ARE NOT NORMALLY BROKEN UP. KEEP THE NOUN PARTS TOGETHER. Ex: A fluid bed reactor = a reactor containing a fluid bed.

Part V. Getting the meaning of difficult phrases or unfamiliar words by trying to understand the description of a process.

On page 3, lines 70 -85 you will find a description of the silt-clearing process. Read the section again. Then answer the following questions.

1. From the context, what must silt be?
2. How is the silt cleared away?

Part VI. Derivations

Give the noun forms of the following verbs:

1. locate _____
2. prepare _____
3. believe _____
4. monitor _____
5. remove _____

Part VII. Use of tenses and voice.

1. Look at lines 24 and 28. Notice the use of the past perfect tense. Why is the past perfect used instead of the present perfect?

2. Why is the active voice used in lines 31 and 32, but the passive voice used in line 33?

Part VIII. Discussion.

Discuss other ways that technology has helped China to progress in years. Give some specific ways that technology can help China progress in the future.

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ESP CLASS

DIRECTIONS: (1) Survey this group of paragraphs. (2) State three questions to set your purpose for reading. Write them in the space provided. (3) Read the paragraphs to answer your questions. (4) Answer the questions following the paragraphs. (Reading taken from an Economics textbook)
Source: Reading & Learning Power --Dorothy Rubin

SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP

A sole proprietorship is literally an individual in business for himself. It is typically " a one-man show." The proprietor owns or obtains the materials and capital equipment used in the operation of his business and personally supervises its operation. Responsibility for the efficient coordination of the resources he owns or command rests directly upon the proprietor's shoulders.

ADVANTAGES

Obviously, this extremely simple type of business organization has certain distinct advantages:

(1) A sole proprieotrship is very easy to organize--there is virtually no legal red tape or expense. The businessman merely acquires the needed facilities and is "in business."

(2) The proprietor is his own boss and has very substantial freedom of action. Since his own profit income depends upon ßs enterprise's success, there is a strong and immediate incentive for him to manage the affairs of his business wisely.

DISADVANTAGES

The sole proprietorship looks very rugged and individualistic. And it clearly is. But the disadvantages of this form of business organization are many:

1. With rare exceptions, the financial resources of a sole proprietorship are insufficient to permit the firm to grow into a largescale enterprise. Specifically, finances are usually limited to what the proprietor has in his bank account and to what he is able to borrow.
Since the mortality rate is very great for proprietorships, commercial banks are not overly eager to extend much credit to them.

2. Being in complete control of an enterprise forces the proprietor to carry out all basic management functions. The proprietor must be a jack-of-all-trades and must make all basic decisions concerning for example, buying, selling, and the acquisition and maintenance of personnel, not to mention the technical aspects which might be involved in producing, advertising, and distributing the product. In short, the potential benefits of specialization in business management are usually inaccessible to the typical small scale proprietorship.

3. Most important of all, the proprietor is subject to unlimited liability. This means that individuals in business for themselves risk not only the assets of the firm but also their personal assets. Should the assets of an unsuccessful proprietorship be insufficient to satisfy the claims of creditors, those creditors can file claims against the proprietor's personal property. The stakes are high insofar as individual proprietorships are concerned.

WRITE THE QUESTIONS WHICH YOU FORMULATE HERE:
(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____

1. What is the central or main idea of the paragraphs? (Summarize)

2. Paraphrase the advantages:

3. Paraphrase the disadvantages:

3. Circle the letter of the correct answer to the following. Pay attention to the context in which the words or phrases are used in the reading.

(1) sole means:
(a) the sun
(b) the only one
(c) part of a shoe
(d) a person who produces

(2) If something "rests directly upon your shoulders" it means that:
(a) it is a heavy burden
(b) it is your distinct responsibility
(c) it is hard to carry
(d) your shoulders are tired

(3) In #1 under ADVANTAGES, why is the dash used between the words organize and there?

(4) incentive most nearly means:
(a) wish
(b) stimulus
(c) demand
(d) necessity

(5) mortality rate means:
(a) the number who survive
(b) the number who go out of business
(c) the number who die
(d) the number who stay alive

(6) a jack-of-all-trades means:
(a) a person who can do many things
(b) a salesman
(c) something used to raise a car
(d) a game of trade

(7) a liability is:
(a) a debt
(b) a line of credit
(c) anything owned that has value
(d) a contract that cannot be enforced

(8) "no legal red tape" means:
(a) the opposite of "in the black"
(b) no legal prodedures that are obstacles
(c) everything is legal
(d) something used to measure things

(9) insofar as means:
(a) to the extent that, where
(b) because
(c) however
(d) in the event that

(10) potential benefits means:
(a) those that are possible to develop
(b) those that must be delayed
(c) those that are unlikely to be developed
(d) those that cannot possibly be developed